

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Rejections Under 102(b) as anticipated by Blaurock et al.

Claims 1-4, 6, and 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Blaurock et al. (USPN 3,838,928, hereinafter “Blaurock”). Applicants continue to respectfully disagree that Blaurock teaches each and every limitation of all of the claims.

The FOA indicates that Blaurock discloses in Figure 7 a “band” 124. Applicants respectfully note that Blaurock actually discloses that element 124 is “a spacer ring 124 prepared by bending a spacer element closely similar to the element 110 [of Figs 4-6] . . .” Col. 4, lines 4-6. Blaurock explains the difference between element 110 and spacer ring 124, including the statement that “[i]t differs from a ring prepared by bending the element 110 mainly by being provided with three [rather than 2] circumferential rows c, d, e of alternating, axially elongated projections and recesses 134, 136.” Col. 4, lines 13-16. Projections 134 and recesses 136 clearly correspond to projections 118 and recesses 116 of element 110. Blaurock states that “the element 110 has two rows 112, 114 of alternating identical recesses 116 and identical projections 118 separated by an elongated strip of *undeformed, flat sheet metal* . . .” Italics added, col. 3, lines 18-21. Blaurock further states that “[t]he projections and recesses in each row are contiguously juxtaposed so that the cross section of the element taken longitudinally of each row, as is seen in Fig. 5, is of continuously undulating, and practically sinusoidal shape.” Col. 3, lines 25-29.

Blaurock labels the strip of undeformed flat sheet metal in Fig. 7 with element number 142, but does not specifically state reference number 142 in the text. However, in Fig. 8, Blaurock specifies corresponding strip portions 160 & 162, wherein “[t]he ring 150 has three rows f, g, h of circumferentially alternating projections and recesses 152, 154 separated by smoothly cylindrical, circumferentially elongated strip portions 160, 162 . . .” Col. 4, lines 26-29. Thus, Blaurock clearly requires that the projections extend in both directions away from the central strip portions, rather than in a *common* radial direction away from the band as claimed.

The FOA also argues that Applicants' claims do not preclude a band that has a first set of protrusions extending in one direction away from the band and a second set of protrusions extending in another direction away from the band. Applicants have amended Claim 1 to explicitly state that all protrusions extend in a common radial direction. Support is found throughout the specification, including figures 1-6.

However, in view of the discussion above with regard to "ring" and "band," Applicants respectfully argue that Blaurock does not disclose, suggest, or make predictable the limitation of Claims 6, 9 and 10 requiring that the *band* engages the shaft. Blaurock only discloses that *projections* engage a shaft. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 6, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) be withdrawn.

Applicants have also amended Claim 1 to specify that the band has an unformed annular portion that is to be engaged with a first component. Claim 1 is further amended to specify that the protrusions all extend in a common radial direction away from the unformed annular portion of the band, wherein the corrugated protrusions form a protrusions load bearing area that is smaller than an unformed annular portion load bearing area configured to distribute a load over the portion of the first component that is to be engaged with the unformed annular portion. In addition, Claim 1 is amended to specify that the guide portion defines an opening of a size other than that defined by the unformed annular portion of the band to facilitate alignment between the unformed annular portion and the first component when the first component is slid against the unformed annular region. New Claims 13-20 are also added with similar limitations and other limitations disclosed in the specification. Support for these amendments and new claims is found through the specification, including figures 4, and 6, and page 8, lines 14-18, page 9, lines 2-4, and lines 12-14, page 14, lines 23-25, page 16, lines 24-26, and page 17, lines 6-7.

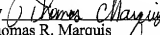
Blaurock does not disclose, suggest, or make predictable the amended limitations, including the limitation of a guide portion to facilitate alignment between an unformed annular portion that is to be engaged with a first component. This latter feature may limit undesirable particle generation caused by abrasion of the first component by the unformed annular portion. As the specification

CONCLUSION

It is respectfully submitted that each of the presently pending claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is requested. Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' representative at the below-listed telephone number if it is believed that the prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby. Although only certain arguments regarding patentability are set forth herein, there may be other arguments and reasons why the claimed invention is patentable. Applicant reserves the right to raise these arguments in the future.

Dated: April 14, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments – Replacement Drawing Sheets